A TRACT CONCERNING SCHISM AND Schismaticks:

Wherein is briefly Discovered

The *Original Causes* of all *Schism.*

By the Ever-memorable

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A TRACT CONCERNING SCHISM AND Schismatics.

A Tract concerning *Schiſm.*

Hereſie and *Schiſm*, as they are commonly uſed, are two Theological Scarecrows, with which they who uſe to uphold a Party in Religion, uſe to fright away ſuch, as making Inquiry into it, are ready to relinquiſh and oppoſe it, if it appear either erroneous and ſuſpicious; for, as *Plutarch* reports of a Painter, who having unskilfully painted a Cock, chaſed away all Cocks and Hens, that ſo the Imperfection of his Art might not appear by Compariſon with Nature; ſo Men willing for Ends to admit of no Fancy but their own, endeavour to hinder an Inquiry into it by way of Compariſon with ſomewhat with it, peradventure truer, that ſo the Deformity of their own might not appear: But howſoever, in the common Manage, *Hereſie* and *Schiſm* are but ridiculous Terms, yet the Things in themſelves are of very conſiderable Moment; the one offending againſt Truth, the other againſt Charity, and therefore both deadly, when they are not by Imputation, but indeed.

It is then a Matter of no ſmall Importance, truly to deſcry the Nature of them, and they on the contrary ſtrengthen themſelves, who through the Iniquity of Men and Times are injuriouſly charged with them.

Schiſm (for of *Hereſie* we ſhall not now treat, except it be by Accident, and that by occaſion of a general Miſtake, ſpread through all the Writings of the Ancients, in which their Names are familiarly confounded:) *Schiſm*, I ſay, upon the very Sound of the Word, imports Diviſion; *Diviſion* is not but where *Communion* is or ought to be: Now *Communion* is the Strength and Ground of all Society, whe-

ther *Sacred* or *Civil*; whosoever therefore they be that offend against the common Society and Friendliness of Men, if it be in Civil Occasions, are guilty of Sedition and Rebellion: If it be by reason of *Ecclesiastical* Difference, they are guilty of *Schism*. So that *Schism* is an *Ecclesiastical Sedition*, as *Sedition* is a *Lay Schism*: Yet the great Benefits of *Communion*, notwithstanding in regard of divers Distempers Men are subject to, Dissention and Disunion, are often necessary: For when either false or uncertain Conclusions are obtruded for Truth, and Acts either unlawful, or ministring just Scruple, are required of us to be perform'd, in these Cases, Consent were Conspiracy; and open Contestation is not Faction or *Schism*, but due Christian Animosity.

For the opening therefore of the Nature of *Schism*, something may be added by way of Difference to distinguish it from necessary Separation; and that is, that the Cause upon which Division is attempted, proceed not from Passion or from Distemper, or from Ambition or Avarice, or such other Ends, as Humane Folly is apt to pursue, but from well weighed and necessary Reasons, and that when all other Means having been tried, nothing will serve to save us from guilt of Conscience, but open Separation; so that *Schism*, if we would define it, is nothing else but an unnecessary Separation of Christians from that part of the visible Church of which they were once Members. Now, As in Mutinies and Civil Dissentions there are two Attendants in Ordinary belonging unto them; one the Choice of one Elector or Guide, in place of the general or ordinary Governor, to rule and guide; the other the appointing of some publick Place or Rendezvous, where publick Meetings must be celebrated: So in Church-dissentions and Quarrels, two Appurtenances there are, which serve to make *Schism* compleat.

First,

First, in the Choice of a Biſhop, in oppoſition to the former, (a thing very frequent amongſt the Ancients, and which many times was the Cauſe and Effect of *Schiſm.*)

Secondly, The erecting of a new Church and Oratory, for the dividing parts to meet in publickly. For till this be done, the *Schiſm* is but yet in the Womb.

In that late famous Controverſie in *Holland, De Prædeſtinatione & auxiliis*, as long as the diſagreeing Parties went no farther than Diſputes and Pen-combats, the *Schiſm* was all that while unhatch'd; but as ſoon as one Party ſwept an old Cloyſter, and by a pretty Art ſuddenly made it a Church, by putting a new Pulpit in it, for the ſeparating Party there to meet; now what before was a Controverſie became a formal *Schiſm.* To know no more than this, if you take it to be true, had been enough to direct you how you are to judge, and what to think of *Schiſm* and *Schiſmaticks*; yet, becauſe of the *Ancients*, (by whom many are more affrighted than hurt) much is ſaid, and many fearful Dooms pronounced in this Caſe. We will deſcend a little to conſider of *Schiſm*, as it were by way of Story, and that partly farther to open that which we have ſaid in General, by inſtancing in Particulars, and partly to diſabuſe thoſe who reverencing Antiquity more than needs, have ſuffer'd themſelves to be ſcar'd with Imputation of *Schiſm* above due meaſure; for, what the *Ancients* ſpake by way of Cenſure of *Schiſm* in General, is moſt true; for they ſaw (and it is no great matter to ſee ſo much) that unadviſed and open Fancy to break the Knot of Union betwixt Man and Man, (eſpecially amongſt Chriſtians, upon whom, above all other kind of Men, the Tye of Love and Communion doth moſt eſpecially reſt) was a Crime hardly pardonable, and that nothing abſolves Men from the Guilt of it, but true and unpretended Conſcience: Yet when they came to pronounce of *Schiſm* in Particular, (whether it was becauſe of their own Intereſt,

or that they ſaw not the Truth, or for what other cauſe God only doth know) their Judgments many times (to ſpeak moſt gently) were juſtly to be ſuſpected. Which that you may ſee, we will range all *Schiſm* into two Ranks.

Firſt is a *Schiſm*, in which only one Party is the *Schiſmatick*; for where Cauſe of *Schiſm* is neceſſary, there not he that ſeparates, but he that is the cauſe of ſeparation, is the *Schiſmatick*.

Secondly, There is a *Schiſm* in which both Parties are the *Schiſmaticks*; for, where the occaſion of ſeparation is unneceſſary, neither ſide can be excuſed from the Guilt of *Schiſm*.

But you will ask, Who ſhall be the Judge, what is neceſſary? Indeed, it is a Queſtion which hath been often made, but I think ſcarcely ever truly anſwered, not becauſe it is a Point of great depth and difficulty truly to aſſoil it, but becauſe the true Solution of it carries fire in the tail of it (for it bringeth with it a piece of Doctrine which is ſeldom pleaſing to Superiors:) to you for the preſent this ſhall ſuffice.

If ſo be you be *anima defæcato*, if you have cleared your ſelf from Froath and Growns, if neither Sloth, nor Fear, nor Ambition, nor any tempting Spirit of that nature abuſe you (for theſe and ſuch as theſe are the true Impediments, why both that, and other Queſtions of the like danger are not truly anſwer'd) if all this be, and yet you know not how to frame your Reſolution, and ſettle your ſelf for that doubt; I will ſay no more of you than was ſaid of *Papias*, St. *John*'s own Scholar, Your Abilities are not ſo good as I preſumed.

But to go on with what I intended, and from that that diverted me, that you may the better judge of the nature of *Schiſms* by their occaſions, you ſhall find that all *Schiſms* have crept into the Church by one of theſe three ways, either upon matter of Fact, or upon matter of Opinion, or point of Ambition; for the firſt, I call that matter of Fact, when ſomething is required

required to be done by us, which either we know, or ſtrongly ſuſpect to be unlawful. So the firſt notable *Schiſm*, of which we read in the Church, contained in it matter of Fact; for, it being upon Error taken for neceſſary, that an *Eaſter* muſt be kept, and upon worſe than Error, (if I may ſo ſpeak) for it was no leſs than a Point of *Judaiſm* forced upon the Church; upon worſe than Error, I ſay, thought farther neceſſary that the Ground of the Time for keeping of that Feaſt muſt be the Rule left by *Moſes* to the *Jews*, there aroſe a ſtout Queſtion, Whether we were to celebrate with the *Jews* on the fourteenth *Moon*, or the *Sunday* following? This matter tho' moſt unneceſſary, moſt vain, yet cauſed as great a Combuſtion as ever was in the Church; the *Weſt* ſeparating and refuſing Communion with the *Eaſt*, for many Years together. In this fantaſtical Hurry I cannot ſee but all the World were *Schiſmaticks*, neither can any thing excuſe them from that Imputation, excepting only this, that we charitably ſuppoſe that all Parties did what they did out of Conſcience, a thing which befel them through the ignorance of their Guides, (for I will not ſay, through their Malice) and that through the juſt Judgment of God, becauſe through Sloth and blind Obedience Men examined not the things which they were taught, but, like Beaſts of Burthen, patiently couch'd down, and indifferently underwent whatſoever their Superiors laid upon them. By the way, by this we may plainly ſee the danger of our Appeal to Antiquity, for Reſolution in controverted Points of Faith, and how ſmall Relief we are to expect from thence; for, if the Diſcretion of the chiefeſt Guides and Directors of the Church did in a Point ſo trivial, ſo inconſiderable, ſo mainly fail them, as not to ſee the Truth in a Subject, wherein it is the greateſt Marvel how they could avoid the Sight of it, Can we, without the Imputation of great Groſsneſs and Folly, think ſo poor-ſpirited Peaſons competent Judges of the Queſtions

now

now on foot betwixt the Churches. Pardon me, I know what Temptation drew that Note from me.

The next *Schism* which had in it matter of Fact, is that of the *Donatists*, who were perswaded (at least pretended so) that it was unlawful to converse or communicate in Holy Duties with Men stained in any notorious Sin; for however that *Austin* do specifie only the *Thurificati & Traditores* and *Libellatici*, &c. as if he separated only from those whom he found to be such, yet by necessary proportion he must refer to all notorious Sinners. Upon this he taught, that in all Places, where Good and Bad were mix'd together, there could be no Church by reason of Pollution, co-operating away from Sinners, which blasted righteous Persons, which conversed with them, and made all unclean. On this Ground, separating himself from all that he list to suspect, he gave out, that the Church was no where to be found but in him and his Associates, as being the only Men among whom wicked Persons found no Shelter, and by consequence the only clean and unpolluted Company, and therefore the only Church. Against this, St. *Augustine* laid down this Conclusion, *Unitatem Ecclesiæ per totum mundum dispersæ præceptam non esse dissendam*, which is indeed the whole Summ of that Father's Disputation against the *Donatists*. Now in one part of this Controversie one thing is very remarkable: The Truth was there, where it was, by meer Chance, and might have been on either side, the reason brought by either Party notwithstanding: For tho' it were *de facto*, false, that *pars Donati* shut up in *Africk*, was the only Orthodox Party, yet it might be true, notwithstanding any thing St. *Augustine* brings to confute it; and on the contrary, tho' it were *de facto*, true, that the Part of Christians dispersed over the whole Earth were Orthodox, yet it might have been false, notwithstanding any thing St. *Augustine* brings to confirm it. For where, or amongst whom, or how many

many the Church shall be, or is, is a thing indifferent; it may be in any Number, more or less, it may be in any Place, Country or Nation, it may be in all, and, for ought I know, it may be in none, without the Prejudice to the Definition of a Church, or the Truth of the Gospel, *North* or *South*; many or few; dispersed in many Places, or confined to one: None of these do either prove or disprove a Church.

Now this *Schism*, and likewise that former, to a wise Man that well understands the Matter in Controversie, may afford perchance Matter of Pity, to see Men so strangely distracted upon Fancy, but of doubt or trouble what to do, it can yield none; for tho' in this *Schism* the *Donatist* be the *Schismatick*, and in the former both Parties be equally engaged in the *Schism*, yet you may safely upon your Occasions communicate with either, if so be you flatter neither in their *Schism*: For why might it not be lawful to go to Church with the *Donatist*, or to celebrate *Easter* with the *Quartodeciman*, if occasion so require, since neither Nature, nor Religion, nor Reason doth suggest any thing of moment to the contrary? For in all Publick Meetings pretending Holiness, so there be nothing done, but what true Devotion and Piety brook, why may I not be present in them, and use communion with them? Nay, what if those, to whom the execution of the publick Service is committed, do something either unseemly or suspicious, or peradventure unlawful? what if the Garments they wear be censured, nay indeed be suspicious? what if the Gesture or Adoration to be used to the Altars, as now we have learned to speak? what if the *Homilist* have preached or delivered any Doctrine of the Truth, of which we are not well perswaded? a thing which very often falls out; yet for all this we may not separate, except we be constrained personally to bear part in them our selves. The Priests under *Ely* had so ill demeaned themselves about the daily Sacrifices, that the Scripture tells us, they made them to stink; yet the People refused not to come to the Tabernacle, nor to bring their Sacrifice to the Priest: For in those *Schisms* which concern Fact, nothing can be a just cause of refusing of Communion, but

only to require the execution of some unlawful or suspected Act; for not only in Reason, but in Religion too, that Maxim admits of no Release, *Cautissimi cujusque Præceptum quod dubitas ne feceris.* Long it was e're the Church fell upon *Schism*, upon this occasion, tho' of late it had very many; for until the second *Council* of *Nice*, in which irreconcilable Superstition and Ignorance did conspire, I say, until the Rout did set up Image-worship, there was not any remarkable *Schism* upon just occasion of Fact; all the rest of *Schisms* of that kind were but Wantons, this was truly serious; in this the *Schismatical* Party was the Synod it self, and such as conspired with it, for, or concerning the Use of Images in Sacrifices.

First, It is acknowledged by all that it is a thing unnecessary.

Secondly, It is by most suspected.

Thirdly, It is by many held utterly unlawful. Can then the enjoining of such a thing be ought else but abuse? or can the refusal of Communion here be thought any other thing than Duty? Here, or upon the like occasion to separate, may peradventure bring personal trouble or danger; (against which it concerns any honest Man to have *pectus Præparatum*;) farther harm it cannot do, so that in these Cases you cannot be to seek what to think, or what you have to do.

Come we then to consider a little of the second sort of *Schism*, arising upon occasion of variety of Opinion: It hath been the common Disease of Christians from the beginning, not to content themselves with that measure of Faith which God and Scriptures have expressly afforded us, but out of a vain Desire to know more than is revealed, they have attempted to devise things, of which we have no Light, neither from Reason nor Revelation; neither have they rested here, but upon Pretence of Church-authority (which is none,) or Tradition (which for the most part is but feigned,) they have peremptorily concluded, and confidently imposed upon others, a necessity of entertaining Conclusions of that Nature, and, to strengthen themselves, have broken out into Divisions and Factions, opposing Man to Man, Synod to Synod, till the Peace

of

of the Church vaniſhed, without all poſſibility of Recal: Hence aroſe thoſe ancient and many Separations amongſt Chriſtians, occaſioned by *Arianiſm*, *Eutichianiſm*, *Neſtorianiſm*, *Photinianiſm*, *Sabellianiſm*, and many more, both ancient, and in our time; all which indeed are but Names of *Schiſm*: Howſoever, in the common Language of the Fathers, they were called *Hereſies*; for *Hereſie* is an Act of the Will, not of the Reaſon, and is indeed a Lye and not a Miſtake, elſe how could that of *Auſtin* go for true, *Errare poſſum, Hæreticus eſſe nolo*: Indeed *Manichæiſm*, *Valentinianiſm*, *Macedonianiſm*, *Mahometiſm*, are truly and properly *Hereſies*: For we know that the Authors of them received them not, but invented them themſelves, and ſo knew what they taught to be a Lye; but can any Man avouch that *Arius* and *Neſtorius*, and others that taught erroneouſly concerning the Trinity, and the Perſon of our *Saviour*, did maliciouſly invent what they taught, and not rather fall upon it by error and miſtake? Till that be done, and upon good evidence, we will think no worſe of all Parties than needs we muſt, and take theſe Rents in the Church to be at the worſt but *Schiſms*, upon matter of Opinion, In which caſe, what we are to do, is not a point of any great depth of underſtanding to diſcover, if ſo be diſtemper and partiality do not intervene: I do not ſee, that *opinionum varietas & opinantium unitas*, are Ἀσύμφωνα, or that Men of different Opinions in Chriſtian Religion may not hold Communion *in Sacris*, and both go to one Church. Why may I not go, if Occaſion require, to an *Arian Church*, ſo there be no *Arianiſm* expreſs'd in their Liturgy? and were Liturgies and Publick Forms of Service ſo framed, as that they admitted not of particular and private Fancies, but contained only ſuch things, as in which all Chriſtians do agree, *Schiſms* on Opinion were utterly vaniſh'd: For conſider of all the Liturgies that are and ever have been, and remove from them whatſoever is Scandalous to any Party, and leave nothing but what all agree on, and the Evil ſhall be, that the Publick Service and Honour of God ſhall no ways ſuffer. Whereas to load our Publick Forms with the Private Fancies upon which we differ, is the moſt ſovereign way to perpetuate

petuate *Schism* unto the World's end; Prayer, Confession, Thanksgiving, Reading of Scriptures, Administration of Sacraments in the plainest and the simplest manner, were Matter enough to furnish out a sufficient Liturgy, tho' nothing either of Private Opinion, or of Church-Pomp, of Garments, or prescribed Gestures, of Imagery, of Musick, of Matter concerning the Dead, of many Superfluities which creep into the Church, under the Name of Order and Decency, did interpose it self.

To charge Churches and Liturgies with things unnecessary, was the first Beginning of all Superstition, and when Scruple of Conscience began to be made or pretended, there *Schism* began to break in; if the special Guides and Fathers of the Church would be a little sparing of incumbring Churches with Superfluities, or not over-rigid either in reviving obsolete Customs, or imposing new, there would be far less Cause of *Schism* or *Superstition*, and all the Inconvenience were likely to ensue would be but this, they should in so doing yield a little to the Imbecility of their Inferiors, a thing which St. *Paul* would never have refused to do; mean while, whereso'ever false or suspected Opinions are made a piece of Church-Liturgy, he that separates is not the *Schismatick*, for it is alike unlawful to make profession of known or suspected falshood, as to put in practise unlawful or suspected actions.

The Third thing I named for Matter of *Schism* was *Ambition*, I mean *Episcopal Ambition*, shewing it self especially in two Heads, one concerning Pluralities of *Bishops* in divers Sees. *Aristotle* tells us, That Necessity causeth but small Faults, but Avarice and Ambition were the Mother of great Crimes: *Episcopal Ambition* hath made this true, for no Occasion hath produced more frequent, more continuous, more sanguinous *Schisms* than this hath done. The Sees of *Alexandria*, of *Constantinople*, of *Antioch*, and above all of *Rome*, do abundantly shew thus much, and all Ecclesiastical Stories witness no less, of which the greatest that consists of factionating and tumultuating of great and potent *Bishops*.

Socrates apologizing for himself, that professing to write an Ecclesiastical Story, he did oft times interlace the

the Actions of secular Princes and other civil Business, tells us, that he did this to refresh his Reader, who otherwise were in danger to be cloy'd by reading so much of the Acts of unquiet and unruly Bishops, ἐν οἷς κατ' ἀλλήλων ἐτύρενον, in which, as a Man may say, they made Butter and Cheese one of another; for τυρόνειν (that I may shew you a cast of my old Office, and open you a Mystery in Grammar,) properly signifies to make Butter and Cheese, and because these are not made without much agitation of the Milk, hence τυρόνειν, by a borrowed and transmuted signification, signifies to do things with much agitation and tumult.

But that I may a little consider of the two Heads I but now specified, the first I mentioned was the *Prelacy of Bishops* in one See. For the general Practice of the Church, since the beginning at least since the original of Episcopacy, as now it is, was never to admit at once more than one Bishop in one See; and so far in this point have they been careful to preserve Unity, that they would not have a Bishop in his See to have two Cathedral Churches; which thing lately brought us a Book out of *France*, *De Monomachia Episcoporum*, written by occasion of the Bishops of *Langres*, who, I know not upon what Fancy, could not be content with one Cathedral Church in his Diocess, but would needs have two, which to the Author of that Work seems to be a kind of Spiritual Polygamy. It fell out amongst the Ancients very often; sometimes upon occasion of difference in Opinions, sometimes because of those who were interessed in the Choice of Bishops; that two and sometimes more were set up, and all Parties striving to maintain their own Bishop, made themselves several Churches, several Congregations, each refusing to participate with others, and many times proceeding to mutual Excommunications. This is that which *Cyprian* calls *Erigere Altare contra Altare*: To this doth he impute the Original of all Church-disorders; and if you read him, you would think he thought no other Church-tumult to be *Schism* but this. This perchance may plead some Excuse; for, tho' in regard of Religion it self, it matters not whether there be one or more Bishops in one

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Dioceſs; for *Epiphanius* reckoning up the Biſhops of *Rome*, makes *Peter* and *Paul* the firſt; and St. *Auguſtine* acknowledgeth for a time he ſate Fellow-Biſhop with his Predeceſſor, tho' he excuſed it, that he did ſo, being ignorant that the contrary had been decreed by the Council of *Nice*; yet it being a thing very convenient for the Peace of the Church to have it ſo, neither doth it any whit favour of their Miſdemeanor, their Puniſhment ſleeps not, who unneceſſarily and wantonly go about to infringe it.

But that other Head of *Epiſcopal Ambition*, concerning *Supremacy of Biſhops* in divers Sees, one claiming *Supremacy* over another, as it hath been from time to time, a great Treſpaſs againſt the Church's Peace, ſo it is now the final Ruine of it. The *Eaſt* and *Weſt*, through the Fury of the two prime Biſhops, being irremediably ſeparated without all Hope of Reconcilement. And beſides all this Miſchief, it is founded on a Vice contrary to all Chriſtian Humility, without which no Man ſhall ſee his Saviour; for they do but abuſe themſelves and others, that would perſwade us, that Biſhops by *Chriſt*'s Inſtitution have any Superiority over other Men farther than of Reverence, or that any Biſhop is Superior to another farther than poſitive Order, agreed upon amongſt Chriſtians, hath preſcribed; for we have believed him that hath told us, that in Jeſus Chriſt there is neither High nor Low, and that in giving Honour every Man ſhould be ready to prefer another before himſelf; which Saying cuts off all Claim certainly of Superiority, by Title of Chriſtianity, except Men think that theſe things were ſpoken only to poor and private Men. Nature and Religion agree in this, that neither of them hath an hand in this Heraldry of *Secundum ſub & ſupra*: All this comes from the Compoſition and Agreement of Men amongſt themſelves; wherefore this Abuſe of Chriſtianity, to make it Lacquey to Ambition, is a Vice for which I have no extraordinary Name of Ignomy, and an ordinary I will not give it, leſt you ſhould take ſo tranſcendent a Vice to be but trivial.

Now concerning *Schiſm* ariſing upon theſe Heads, you can-

cannot be for Behaviour much to ſeek; for you may ſafely communicate with all Parties, as Occaſion ſhall call you, and the *Schiſmaticks* here are all thoſe who are Head of the Faction, together with thoſe who foment it; for private and indifferent Perſons they may be Spectators of theſe Contentious as ſecurely in regard of any Peril of Conſcience, (for of Danger in Purſe or Perſon I keep no account,) as at a Cock-fight where Serpents fight, who cares who hath the better? The beſt Wiſh is, That both may periſh in the Fight.

And for Conventicles, of the Nature of which we deſire to be informed, thus much in general evidently appears, That all Meetings, upon an unneceſſary Separation are to be ſo ſtiled; ſo that in ſenſe a Conventicle is nothing elſe but a Congregation of *Schiſmaticks*, yet Time hath taken leave ſometimes to fix this Name upon good and honeſt Meetings, and that perchance not altogether without good Reaſon; for without Publick Religious Meetings thus it fares: Firſt, It hath been at all Times confeſſed neceſſary, that God requires not only inward and private Devotion, when Men either in their Hearts and Cloſets, or within their private Walls, pray, praiſe, confeſs and acknowledge; but he farther requires all thoſe things to be done in Publick, by troops and ſhoales of Men, and from hence have proceeded publick Temples, Altars, Forms of Service, Appointed Times, and the like, which are required for open Aſſemblies, yet whilſt Men were truly Pious, all Meetings of Men for mutual Help of Piety and Devotion whereſoever and by whomſoever celebrated, were permitted, without Exception.

But when it was eſpied that ill-affected Perſons abuſed Private Meetings, whether Religious or Civil, to evil Ends, Religiouſneſs to groſs Impiety, as appears in the *Ethnick*, *Eluſinia*, and *Bacchanalia*, and Chriſtian Meetings under the Pagan Princes, when for fear they durſt not come together in open View, were charged with foul Imputations, as by the Report of Chriſtians themſelves plainly appears, and civil Meetings, many times under Pretence of friendly and neighbourly Viſits, ſheltered

tered treasonable Attempts against Princes and Commonwealths.

Hence both Church and State joined, and jointly gave Order for Forms, Times, Places of Publick Meetings, whether for Religion or Civil Ends. And all other Meetings whatsoever, besides those of which both Time and Place are limited, they censured for Riots and Riotous and unlawful Assemblies in the State, and in the Church for Conventicles.

So that it is not lawful, no not for Prayer, for Hearing, for Conference, for any other Religious Office whatsoever, for People to assemble otherwise than by Publick Order is allowed; neither may we complain of this in Times of Corruption, for why should Men desire to do that suspiciously in Private which warrantably may be performed in Publick.

But in Times of manifest Corruptions and Persecutions, wherein Religious Assembling is dangerous, Private Meetings however, besides Publick Order, are not only Lawful, but they are of Necessity and Duty; else how should we excuse Meetings of Christians for Publick Service in Time of Danger and Persecutions, and of our selves in Queen *Mary*'s Days? And how will those of the Roman Church amongst us put off the Imputation of Conventicling, who are known amongst us privately to assemble for Religious Exercises, against all Established Order, both in State and Church? For indeed all Pious Assemblies, in Times of Persecution and Corruptions, however practised, are indeed or rather alone the lawful Congregations, and Publick Assemblies, tho' according to Form of Law, are indeed nothing else but Riots and Conventicles, if they be stained with Corruption and Superstition.

FINIS.